

loan schemes leading to self employment are expected to have positive impact upon its beneficiaries of whom approximately 10-15% fall in the age group.

(b) and (c). Question does not arise.

[Translation]

Sabotage of Railway Tracks

3655. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :
KUMARI UMABHARATI :
SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a significant increase in the incidents of sabotage of railway tracks in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the States where most of the incidents of sabotage of rail tracks have taken place;

(d) the loss suffered by the country as a result thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to prevent these incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (e) the registration, investigation, detection and prevention of crime relating to Railways is the responsibility of the Government Railway Police (GRP) which functions under the control of respective State Governments/UT Administrations. Information under the Crime Head 'Sabotage of Railway Tracks' is not maintained at the Central level.

[English]

Financial Powers to States

3656. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have set up a permanent Committee under the Inter-State Council to examine the proposals for devolution of more financial powers to States;

(b) if so, whether any Standing Committee has been appointed to report to the Government in this regard within shortest period of time; and

(c) if so, the main points referred to the Committee and the time by which the Committee is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (c). In its second meeting held on 15.10.1996, the Inter-State Council recommended that there should be Standing Committee of the Council for continuous

consultations and processing of matters for the considerations of the Council. The said Committee has since been constituted. This Committee will :

(i) have continuous consultations and process matters for considerations of the Council.

(ii) review and update the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission especially the vital questions of devolution of financial powers from the Central Government to the State Governments;

(iii) examine the changes required in article 356 of the Constitution;

(iv) consider the current views of the State Governments on 179 recommendations on which there was a consensus in the Sub-Committee and also the 12 items on which there was no consensus;

(v) process all matters pertaining to Centre-State relations before they are taken up for consideration in the Inter-State Council.

(vi) monitor the implementation of decisions taken on the recommendations of the Council; and

(vii) consider any other matter referred to it by the Chairman/Council.

The Standing Committee will submit its report on items (ii) and (iii) above within three months.

[Translation]

Home Guards

3657. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the security of the office of the Chief Controller (Pension) which was with the Home Guards under his Ministry has now suddenly been withdrawn and entrusted to a Private Company;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the annual expenditure being incurred on the new arrangement;

(c) whether it has been reported that this had been done with the connivance of the officers of the said office; and

(d) if so, the measures being taken by the Ministry to restore the same with the Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b). The services of the Home Guards have been withdrawn from 31.10.1996. The Central Pension Accounting Office has now entrusted the security of the office to a private security agency which is also providing security cover to the Passport Office under the Ministry of External Affairs and is approved by the Security Bureau of that Ministry. This arrangement has been

made since the security provided by the Home Guards was not considered satisfactory by the Central Pension Accounting Office. The annual expenditure being incurred on the new arrangement is Rs. 1.80 lakhs.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Yamuna Action Plan

3658. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Yamuna Action Plan Project is being funded by the Government of Japan.

(b) if so, the estimate cost thereof; and

(c) the total amount of Japanese assistance obtained for the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) The Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), Japan is providing soft loan to part finance the Yamuna Action Plan.

(b) The estimated cost of the Yamuna Action Plan is Rs. 479.56 crores.

(c) An amount of Japanese Yen 17.773 billion as financial assistance is available for Yamuna Action Plan.

Chief Ministers of North Eastern States

3659. SHRI CHITTA BASU : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any circular seeking opinion of the 5 Chief Ministers of North Eastern States on a proposal for the merger of five existing states into a single State in July last has been issued;

(b) if so, the salient features of the circular; and

(c) the reaction of the Chief Ministers thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

[Translation]

Compensation to Farmers of Border Areas

3660. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have paid compensation to the farmers whose land has been acquired for erecting fencing along the Indo-Pak border;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the time by which the compensation is likely to be paid?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (c). The Compensation to the farmers whose land has been used for fencing on Indo-Pak border is already being paid through concerned State Governments and the matter is being pursued with them for payment to the farmers at the earliest.

[English]

Illegal Arms

3661. SHRI PINAKI MISRA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a racket of illicit arms with Pakistan link has been busted in Delhi on September 22, 1996;

(b) if so, the details of seizures and the persons apprehended in this regard indicating the modus operandi of the gang and its Pakistani links; and

(c) the preventive steps taken by the Government to liquidate the gang their activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The Delhi Police arrested two persons on the 22nd September, 1996 from opposite the Taj Hotel, Jama Masjid, Delhi and recovered 50 live cartridges from them. The U.P. Police had a day earlier arrested two other Persons from Saharanpur from whom several revolvers and pistols alongwith cartridges were recovered. The investigations conducted in these two cases have revealed that the persons arrested at the two places had links with some Pakistani associates and the arms were being brought in from Pakistan for use in terrorist and disruptive activities in the country. A "coolie" working at Attari Border who was being used as a conduit for supply of the arms and ammunition to the arrested persons was also arrested by the U.P. Police.

(c) The measures taken by the Delhi Police to curb such activities in Delhi include close co-ordination with the Central and State Intelligence agencies; checking of suspected guest houses/hide-outs; strict watch on foreigner tourist camps; larger deployment of spotters/watchers; verification of new tenants; checking of suspected vehicles; display of photographs of known terrorists at public places and soliciting greater public cooperation.

[Translation]

Working of Fellowship unit of Ambedkar Foundation

3662. SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any